

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT AU PRINCE 1270

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, HA
SUBJECT: HAITIAN HUMAN RIGHTS LEAGUE FORMED

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. THE HAITIAN LEAGUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS WAS FORMED ON MARCH 25, 1978 ACCORDING TO LETTERS DATED MARCH 29 ADDRESSED TO THE NEWS MEDIA, SELECTED DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS. THE LETTERS WERE SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE NEW ORGANIZATION, MAX C. DUPLESSY, WHO IS A PROMINENT LAWYER AND JURIST. THE VICE PRESIDENT IS EDMOND PIERRE-PAUL, THE FORMER GOVERNMENT PROSECUTOR OF THE SUPREME COURT WHO WAS A POLITICAL PRISONER FROM APRIL 1970 TO DECEMBER 1976. THE SECRETARY-GENERAL IS GERARD GOURGES, A SENIOR PROFESSOR OF LAW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAITI AND AN OUT-SPOKEN ADVOCATE OF FREE EXPRESSION.

2. ACCORDING TO THE LEAGUE'S BY-LAWS, ITS PURPOSE WILL BE TO PROMOTE THE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND ESSENTIAL LIBERTIES GUARANTEED BY THE HAITIAN CONSTITUTION, HAITIAN LAW, AND THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS CONVENTION. DUPLESSY'S LETTERS STATE EXPLICITLY THAT THE LEAGUE "IS NOT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A PARTY. IT IS AN ASSOCIATION SOLELY CONCERNED WITH SEEING THE TRIUMPH OF LAW AND JUSTICE. IT CONDEMNS, IN PRINCIPLE AND A PRIORI ALL MOVEMENT SUBVERSIVE OF THE PUBLIC ORDER."

3. IN PERSONAL LETTERS TO AMBASSADOR JONES AND AMBASSADOR ANDREW YOUNG, LEAGUE PRESIDENT DUPLESSY PAYS TRIBUTE TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES WHICH MADE IT

POSSIBLE FOR SUCH A GROUP TO BE FORMED IN HAITI.

4. THE NEW LEAGUE STATES IT WILL SEEK MEMBERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS AND HAS APPLIED TO THE HAITIAN GOVERNMENT FOR FORMAL RECOGNITION SO IT CAN EXPAND ITS MEMBERSHIP BEYOND THE 20 PERSONS TO WHICH HAITIAN LAW LIMITS ORGANIZATIONS WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN FORMALLY RECOGNIZED.

5. THE NEWS OF THE LEAGUE'S FOUNDING WAS WIDELY REPORTED BY PORT-AU-PRINCE RADIO STATIONS OVER THE WEEKEND AND THE APRIL 3 EDITION OF THE GOVERNMENT DAILY LE NOUVEAU MONDE CARRIES DUPLESSY'S LETTER TO THAT ORGAN TOGETHER WITH THE LIST OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS. END UNCLASSIFIED.

6. COMMENT: BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. THE LEAGUE IS APPARENTLY AN INDEPENDENT INITIATIVE NOT BEHOLDEN TO THE GOVERNMENT. IN ADDITION TO PIERRE-PAUL, AT LEAST ONE OTHER FOUNDING MEMBER SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF THE DUVALIERS -- MRS. LAURA TURNIER WHO IS THE WIDOW OF ARMY OFFICER CHARLES TURNIER BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN EXECUTED IN APRIL 1963. WE ASSUME OFFICIAL RECOGNITION WILL BE GRANTED IN VIEW OF FAVORABLE REACTION BY GOVERNMENT MEDIA.

7. LEAGUE'S FORMATION IS ANOTHER WELCOME ADVANCE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN HAITI. IT SHOULD BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE FRANKLY WITH RESPECTED INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS WITHOUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HANGUPS GOH HAS ON SUCH MATTERS. LEAGUE ALSO CREATES NEW AVENUE FOR PURSUIT OF EMBASSY'S OBJECTIVE OF IMPROVED HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVANCE IN HAITI. WE ARE PLANNING TO MEET WITH LEAGUE'S LEADERS TO EXPLORE WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN HELP.

8. LEAGUE'S BY-LAWS AND FULL LIST OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS WILL BE SUBMITTED BY AIRGRAM TOGETHER WITH DUPLESSY'S LETTERS TO AMBASSADORS JONES AND YOUNG.
JONES

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